

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-19 (Canceled)

Add new claims 20-42 as follows:

20. (New) A fixed center die module for use in an extrusion apparatus through which molten material is continuously extruded to form a tubular structure, wherein said fixed center die module is configured such that the molten material is divided into a plurality of separate and equal portions.

21. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 20 wherein said fixed center die module comprises a plurality of raised surfaces extending from a central longitudinal axis thereof, said raised surfaces providing a plurality of passages between said plurality of raised surfaces such that said molten material is divided into said plurality of separate and equal portions.

22. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 20, wherein said fixed center die module further comprises a diverter for distributing the molten material through said plurality of passages to uniformly divide the molten material into a plurality of separate and equal portions and provide a balanced flow of said molten material.

23. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 22, wherein said diverter distributes said molten material to a first set of passages wherein said molten material is divided into two separate and equal portions, and subsequently urges said molten material in said first set of passages to a second set of passages wherein said two separate and equal portions are subsequently divided into four separate and equal portions.

24. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 23, wherein said fixed center die module exhibits a frusto-conical configuration around said center longitudinal axis.

25. (N w) The fixed center die module of claim 22, further comprising a tubular member having a uniform inner circumference along said central longitudinal axis from which said plurality of raised surfaces extend.

26. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 20 wherein said fixed center die module cooperates with an extrusion die head to provide a balanced flow of said molten material.

27. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 26, wherein said fixed center die module is configured to evenly distribute and coat said molten material onto a cylindrical body issuing from said tubular member.

28. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 27 wherein said cylindrical body is a mandrel, wire or tubular structure.

29. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 27 wherein said balanced flow of molten material is extruded as an unsupported tubular structure.

30. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 20 wherein said extrusion apparatus is a crosshead extruder.

31. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 20, wherein said fixed center die module is useful in the manufacture of high pressure hose.

32. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 31, wherein said fixed center die module is useful in the manufacture of power steering hose.

33. (New) The fixed center die module of claim 21 wherein the configuration of said fixed center die module precludes the need for continuous die adjustment to achieve predetermined cross-section and uniform wall gauge concentricity of said tubular structure.

34. (New) A fixed center die module for use in a crosshead extrusion apparatus through which molten material is continuously extruded to form a tubular structure, wherein said fixed center die module exhibits a frusto-conical shape configured to slidably mate with a tapered interior wall surface of an extruder housing, said fixed center die module comprising:

a tubular member having a uniform inner circumference and an outer surface along its longitudinal axis;

a plurality of raised surfaces integral with and extending from said outer surface of said tubular structure;

a plurality of passages between said plurality of raised surfaces, said plurality of passages including a first set of passages through which molten material is uniformly divided into two separate and equal portions, and a second set of passages through which said two separate and equal portions are uniformly divided into four separate and equal portions of molten material to provide a balanced flow of molten material; and

a diverter integral with and extending from said outer surface of said tubular member for distributing said molten material to said plurality of passages, wherein said fixed center die module is configured to preclude the need for continuous die adjustment to achieve said balanced flow of molten material to an extruder die head in the manufacture of a tubular structure having a pre-determined cross-section and uniform wall gauge concentricity.

35. (New) A method for manufacturing a tubular structure comprising:

continuously introducing molten material into an extrusion apparatus;

dividing said molten material into two separate and equal portions in a first divisional sequence;

dividing said two separate and equal portions of molten material into four separate and equal portions exhibiting a balanced flow of molten material in a second sequence; and

delivering said four separate and equal portions of molten material to an extrusion head through which said four separate and equal portions of molten material are extruded to form a tubular structure having a predetermined cross-section size and uniform wall gauge concentricity, said method precluding the need for die adjustment to achieve said predetermined cross-section size and uniform wall gauge concentricity.

36. (New) The method of claim 35 wherein said fixed center die module is employed to provide a molten material exhibiting a balanced flow of molten material to said extrusion head, said fixed center die module comprising a tubular member having a uniform inner circumference along its longitudinal axis and a plurality of raised surfaces extending from and integral with an outer surface of said tubular member, said plurality of raised

surfaces exhibiting a frusto-conical configuration along said longitudinal axis and providing a plurality of passages between said plurality of raised surfaces such that said molten material is divided into said two separate and equal portions in said first divisional sequence and said two separate and equal portions are subsequently divided into said four separate and equal portions of molten material in said second divisional sequence.

37. (New) The method of claim 36 wherein said tubular structure is a high pressure hose.

38. (New) The method of claim 37 wherein said high pressure hose is a power steering hose.

39. (New) The method of claim 35 further comprising the step of providing a reinforcing material around the outer surface of said tubular structure.

40. (New) The method of claim 39 wherein said reinforcing material is braided or spiral constructed fiber.

41. (New) The method of claim 40 wherein said braided or spiral constructed fiber is selected from the group consisting of glass fiber, polyester fiber, polyamide fiber and partially acetyl-formed polyvinyl alcohol fiber.

42. (New) The method of claim 41 wherein said molten material is vulcanized or unvulcanized rubber material.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS**

Replace original FIG. 1 of the drawing with the corrected FIG. 1 attached herewith.